

Woman reports assault by security salesman in home



Johnny Lara 06/01/1988

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A woman who responded to a door-to-door sales call expecting to buy a product that would make her feel safe, instead found herself trapped alone in her home with a sexual predator who was posing as a home security specialist.

La Porte police are looking for Johnny Angel Lara, 23, who has prior arrests for theft and marijuana possession and was working in the La Porte area for a contract company affiliated with ADT home security systems, police said. Lara allegedly used his uniform and company ID to convince the victim to let him into her home to discuss the need for a security system.

According to reports, at approximately 6:30 p.m. on May 1, Lara approached the home in Fairmont Park West and immediately identified himself as an employee of the home security service, attempting to sell the victim an alarm system. The victim allowed Lara inside her residence, and Lara immediately started to make sexual comments.

The victim, whose name has not been released, promptly asked him to leave.

Lara allegedly began touching the female inappropriately, but the victim was able to talk Lara from going further, and was able to get Lara to the front door.

Lara then left the residence without making any threats toward the victim.

Within a matter of days, case detectives identified Lara as the suspect and charges for attempted sexual assault were filed against Lara with the Harris County District Attorney's Office.

Sgt. John Krueger of the La Porte Police Department said the best way to avoid this is to not let any strangers into your home, regardless of the reason.

"The best course of action, for women or any other resident for that matter, is to advise any solicitor that you are not interested and simply shut the door in an undeviating manner," Krueger said. "Solicitors are familiar with the process and recognize that they are going to have a low percentage of reception and subsequent sales. Therefore if there is a second knock at your door after you have already stated politely that you're not interested, then call your local police department's non-emergency line to inform of a bothersome solicitor."

But what if the product they're selling is something you might want to buy?

Krueger said be patient, and accept a business card or company literature at the door without allowing the person to enter the home.

"Give the company a call (and ask if the person is known to be working in the area) or research the organization on the Internet," Krueger said. "Letting a stranger into your home is never a wise choice, solicitor or not. Initial business can always be conducted on the front doorstep if you truly find yourself interested."

Krueger said when dismissing a suspicious solicitor, take a note of the person's appearance and distinguishing characteristics, such as clothing style and color, hair and skin color, as well as direction of travel.

"By collecting such information, whether mentally or by writing it down on paper, residents can provide police patrols with more accurate information as officers begin searching an area," Krueger said.